

# Fifth Sunday in Lent

## Holy Communion

March 26, 2023 9:00 a.m.

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**Welcome to worship this morning!**

If you are new to the congregation, please know that **children** are welcome to remain in worship or take a break in our “Kids’ Korner” in the gathering space where the service is piped in for parents. **Bathrooms** are located down the hall past the church office. All who desire the sacrament are welcome for **communion**. During Holy Communion we will invite all who desire to come forward to kneel at the altar rail. The **hymns** are printed in the red book available in the pew rack.

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**PRELUDE:** *Herr, wie du willst, so schick's mit mir*

Johann Gottfried Walther

**WELCOME**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In the name of the Father,  
and of the **+** Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. I invite you to kneel or remain standing. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

Most merciful God,  
we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.  
**Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

**OPENING HYMN: *You Are The Way***

**ELW 758**

## **GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

**KYRIE**

**ELW 157**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*The congregation may be seated.*

## **FIRST READING: Ezekiel 37:1-14**

*Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is a promise that Israel as a nation, though dead in exile, will live again in their land through God's life-giving spirit. Three times Israel is assured that through this vision they will know that "I am the Lord."*

A reading from Ezekiel:

<sup>1</sup>The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup>He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. <sup>3</sup>He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." <sup>4</sup>Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. <sup>5</sup>Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup>I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord."

<sup>7</sup>So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. <sup>8</sup>I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. <sup>9</sup>Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." <sup>10</sup>I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

<sup>11</sup>Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' <sup>12</sup>Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup>And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup>I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord."

The Word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM 130 [Read Responsively]**

<sup>1</sup>Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD.

<sup>2</sup>**LORD, hear my voice!**  
**Let your ears be attentive**  
**to the voice of my supplications!**

<sup>3</sup>If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities,  
LORD, who could stand?

<sup>4</sup>**But there is forgiveness with you,**  
**so that you may be revered.**

<sup>5</sup>I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,  
and in his word I hope;

<sup>6</sup>**my soul waits for the LORD**  
**more than those who watch for the morning,**  
**more than those who watch for the morning.**

<sup>7</sup>O Israel, hope in the LORD!  
For with the LORD there is steadfast love,  
and with him is great power to redeem.

<sup>8</sup>**It is he who will redeem Israel**  
**from all its iniquities.**

The Word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

## Setting Four

Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,

slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

### HOLY GOSPEL: John 11:17-45

*Jesus is moved to sorrow when his friend Lazarus falls ill and dies. Then, in a dramatic scene, he calls his friend out of the tomb and restores him to life.*

The Holy Gospel according to John.  
Glory to you, O Lord.

<sup>17</sup>When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup>Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, <sup>19</sup>and many had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. <sup>20</sup>When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. <sup>21</sup>Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup>But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." <sup>23</sup>Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup>Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." <sup>25</sup>Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, <sup>26</sup>and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup>She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

<sup>28</sup>When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” <sup>29</sup>And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup>Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup>A crowd was with Mary in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. <sup>32</sup>When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” <sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her weeping, and the crowd who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. <sup>34</sup>He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” <sup>35</sup>Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup>So the crowd said, “See how he loved him!” <sup>37</sup>But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

<sup>38</sup>Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” <sup>40</sup>Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” <sup>41</sup>So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” <sup>43</sup>When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” <sup>44</sup>The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

<sup>45</sup>Many of the crowd therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Brian

APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation. I invite you kneel or remain standing.

*A brief silence.*

God of life, You have breathed into us the breath of life. Enliven your church. Deepen our partnerships with our companion churches around the globe and bless the work of missionaries who accompany them. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of new life, Your spirit brings life to creation. Enliven the natural world and restore ecosystems in need of healing. Uplift prophetic voices that turn us to the needs of the soil beneath our feet and the air all around. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of justice, You redeem the world and its peoples. Free us from systems of oppression. Unbind nations and societies from the sins of racism, sexism, and homophobia. Raise up leaders at all levels of government who work to promote the dignity of every human life. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of compassion, You weep when we weep. Be present with those who grieve or who are troubled by illness. You hear us when we call to you. Deliver us from the depths of our despair, and free us from the worries that bind us. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of light, Your Spirit of life dwells in our assembly. Bless the music ministries of this congregation and all who lead us in hymns of praise and thanksgiving and in songs of lament and prayer. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For what else shall we pray? (*Here worshippers may raise other prayers, aloud or silently, ending each prayer with the words, Merciful God, to which the congregation may respond, receive our prayer.*)

God of all, You are the resurrection and the life. Even though we die, we will live. With thanksgiving, we remember all your saints who now live in your eternal love. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

## PEACE

The Peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

## OFFERING

*Thank you for your continued generosity and faithfulness! At this time ushers will pass the offering plate if you desire to give a financial gift. Donations may also be given online at [www.stmatthewavon.org](http://www.stmatthewavon.org) or mailed to the church.*

## OFFERTORY: *Rich in Promise*

Robert Buckley Farlee  
(Text: Susan Palo Cherwien)

Rich in promise, rich in present,  
dry as dust and desert sand,  
buried in the potent land,  
deep and dark the grain lies dormant:  
Behold, God does a new thing,  
through death God brings new life.

Running river in the desert,  
water meets the wilderness,  
transformation, more from less,  
swollen seed sends newness skyward:  
Behold, God does a new thing,  
through death God brings new life.

Parable of grain and greening,  
paradox of death and birth,  
story of our wait in earth  
for the sacramental raining:  
Behold, God does a new thing,  
through death God brings new life.

So we move from seed to ripeness,  
so we move from grain to green,  
letting go of what has been,  
we embody God's great promise:  
Behold, God does a new thing,  
through death, God brings new life.

Rich in Promise, Susan Palo Cherwien  
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## DOXOLOGY

*All rise as the communion elements are brought forward.*

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
praise him, all creatures here below;  
praise him above, ye heav'nly host;  
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

## OFFERING PRAYER

God of good gifts,  
receive these and all our offerings  
as we present them in faithful service  
for the sake of your gospel.  
Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal  
as you pour out your very presence  
through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life. **Amen.**

## HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

Lift up your hearts.

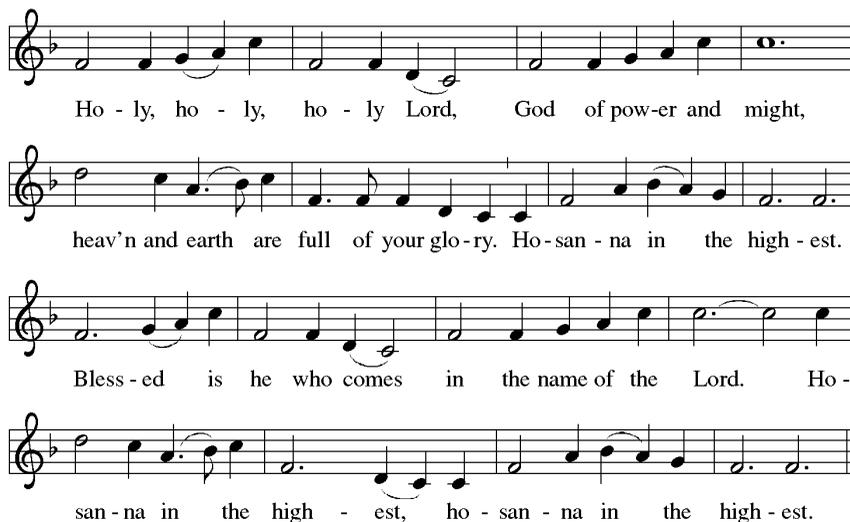
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**And also with you.**

**We lift them to the Lord.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.  
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -  
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Blessed are you, O God of the universe.  
Your mercy is everlasting  
and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.  
Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.  
Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.  
Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness  
to the land of milk and honey.  
Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.  
Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.  
Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.  
In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.  
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

With this bread and cup  
we remember our Lord's passover from death to life  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:  
**Christ has died.**  
**Christ is risen.**  
**Christ will come again.**

O God of resurrection and new life:  
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us  
and on these gifts of bread and wine.  
Bless this feast.  
Grace our table with your presence.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.  
Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.  
Breathe new life into us.  
Send us forth,  
burning with justice, peace, and love.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

With your holy ones of all times and places,  
with the earth and all its creatures,  
with sun and moon and stars,  
we praise you, O God,  
blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever. **Amen.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Christ invites you to this table. Come, taste and see.

*At this time, we invite you to come forward with your communion kit and kneel at the altar rail or to remain in your seat to commune there. Trash bins will be available at the side of the altar rail and as you exit the church.*

## THE DISTRIBUTION

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

## AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have  
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the  
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace.

## COMMUNION HYMN: *Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast*

ELW 516

### BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

May the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. Embodied God,  
at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus.  
With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise,  
empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors  
and touch the world with your love. **Amen.**

### BENEDICTION

God, the giver of love,  
✠ Christ, the resurrection and the life,  
and the Holy Spirit of rebirth  
bless you in this Lenten journey. **Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve in love.

**Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE

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**This morning, altar flowers are given in memory of Bulleyya Thorlapati.**

### MANY THANKS THIS MORNING TO OUR:

**Usher:** Maddie Trimble

**Lector:** Mia Mehler

**Assisting Minister:** Ellie Mehler

**Live Stream:** Perry Hasson

**Altar Guild:** Lynn Metz & Sue Young

**Acolyte:** Brooke Mehler

### STAFF

The Rev. Dr. Brian R. Rajcok, Pastor-pastorbrian@stmatthewavon.org

Sarah Schiener, Director of Music - contact the Church office (860) 673-3301

Paul Martin, Church Administrator - office@stmatthewavon.org

Roy Zurell, Sexton – contact the Church office (860) 673-3301

Visit us on our website: [www.stmatthewavon.org](http://www.stmatthewavon.org)

### THE WEEK AHEAD

**Sunday:** 9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service

10:20 a.m. Adult Forum & Sunday School

**Tuesday:** 7:00 p.m. Worship & Music Meeting

**Wednesday:** 9:30 a.m. Weight Watchers (Hall of the Evangelists)  
5:00 p.m. Weight Watchers (Hall of the Evangelists)

**Thursday:** 2:00 p.m. Centering Prayer  
6:00 p.m. Mid-week Taizé Service  
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

**Sunday:** 9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service  
10:20 a.m. Palm Sunday Breakfast

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ADULT FORUM

Please join us today at **Adult Forum** to hear Sandy Betsch's presentation entitled, "Ancient Words for Today's Journey". We hope you will share your life or Confirmation verse, and what that has meant in your life.

### PALM SUNDAY BREAKFAST SIGN-UP

Fellowship Committee needs your help! We're looking for volunteers to prepare and/or bring food to the Palm Sunday Breakfast that will take place following Worship Service on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. There will be sign-up sheets on the bulletin board whether you want to help, or simply want to join us for the meal. We are looking to get an estimate of how many people are attending for set-up purposes. You can also use the sign-up links in the weekly Constant Contact email, or simply notify the office that you're attending, or willing to help.

### WORSHIP & MUSIC

Worship & Music Committee will be meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>. All are welcome to join the meeting, provide their insights, suggestions, and work with the various ministries that help make service so special.

## SMLC CHOIR

During Lent, the St. Matthew Choir will rehearse on **Thursday** evenings at **7:00pm**, following the midweek Lenten services. Anyone who enjoys singing is welcome to join us.

## DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

### Grace Lutheran

SMLC is partnering with Grace Lutheran Church to divert food *away* from landfills and *into* the hands of those in need like shelters, pantries, and soup kitchens. If you wish to donate, or read more about this project, please go to [Patronicity.com](http://Patronicity.com) and search "**Food Recovery**".

### Relay for Life

SMLC Member Zoey Hatinen will be the Team Captain for the AVFD Explorers in this year's Relay for Life held on Palm Sunday. If you wish to donate to her cause, the links are available in the weekly Constant Contact.

### ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving

During Lent, ELCA World Hunger will be running a program called "40 Days of Giving". If you'd like to know more, please visit: [elca.org/40days](http://elca.org/40days). Also, you may donate via check directly through SMLC. If you choose to do so, please write "ELCA World Hunger" in the memo line of your check.

### *St. Matthew Mission Statement:*

*St. Matthew Lutheran Church is a worshipping community called to proclaim God's love for all and to grow spiritually together. Challenged by Jesus' example, we strive to connect people of all ages, abilities, and needs, and to nurture them to be disciples of Christ. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we reach out to the wider community and welcome our neighbors to a life of worship, preaching, teaching, Christian care, service, and spiritual growth.*

*In Christ, We Are*

*Digging Deep, Reaching Out, Changing Lives.*